

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, May 23, 1917 eBook

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CHARIVARIA.

Mr. William Watson describes his new book of verse, *The Man Who Saw*, as “an intermittent commentary on the main developments and some of the collateral phenomena of the War.” People are already asking, “Why was a man like this left out of the Dardanelles Commission?”

Weeds are a source of great trouble to the amateur gardener, says a contemporary, because he is not always able to recognise them. A good plan is to pull them out of the ground. If they come up again they are weeds.

We hope that Mr. *Charles Cochran* is not indisposed, but we have not noticed a new revue by him this week.

Sulphur from Italy is being distributed by the Explosives Committee. This body must not be confused with the Expletives Committee, which gets its supply of sulphur straight from the Front.

The Metropolitan Water Board is appealing against waste of water. It is proposed to provide patriotic householders with attractive cards stating that the owner of the premises in which the card is displayed is bound in honour not to touch the stuff.

According to a member of the Inventions Board, over two thousand solutions of the U-boat problem have already been received. Unfortunately this is more than the number of U-boats available for experiment, but it is hoped that by strictly limiting the allowance to one submarine per invention the question may be determined in a manner satisfactory to the greatest possible number.

Of eight applications received by the Barnes Council for the vacancy of Inspector of Nuisances three came from men of military age. It is expected that the Council will suggest that these gentlemen should be invited to inspect the nuisances in front of the British trenches.

The proprietor of thirteen steam rollers told the Egham Tribunal that in two years he had only been able to take one of them out of the yard. We cannot think that he has really tried. Much might have been done with kindness and a piece of cheese, while we have often seen quite large steam rollers being enticed along the road by a man with a red flag.

A Swiss correspondent is informed that "Hindenburg's legs are no longer strong enough to support him." The weakness appears to be gradually extending to his arms.

"The starched collar must go," remarks a contemporary ruefully. Not, we hope, before a substitute has been found for some of those unwashable necks.

"Lady conductors," said the Underground Railway official last week, "must remember that the seats and straps are put there for the use of the passengers." We know all about straps, but we have often wondered what it feels like to use one of the seats on the Underground.

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The police have raided a coining plant in Marylebone. It is becoming more and more difficult to make money.

Under a recent Government order the importation of wild animals into Great Britain is forbidden. Allotment holders throughout the country hope the order will be read out to any wireworm or potato-moth that attempts to land at our ports.

A deputation to the *food controller* has demanded that the allowance of bread to farm labourers should be increased to two pounds per head per day. The amount is considered excessive in view of the national needs, and the alternative course of permitting them to eat all they can grow is being favourably considered.

Mr. *Mitchel*, the Mayor of New York, has forbidden musicians to play the National Anthems of the Allies in ragtime. Mr. *Mitchel* is a great humanitarian and simply hates the sound of anything in pain.

The German Society of Actors and Singers had forbidden its members to sing in the United States. Enthusiasts from the latter country are planning an early trip to Northern France rather than miss entertainment in the Siegfried and Wotan line.

Following so closely upon the report that a Wallasey woman had discovered a German coin in a loaf of bread we were not surprised by a contemporary headline, "Seymour Hicks in a new Role."

Damage to the extent of twenty-five thousand pounds is said to have been caused to the crops in Australia by mice, and the Australian authorities contemplate the purchase of a mouse trap.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Economist* (soliloquising). “We must all deny ourselves something. And to think, despite the paper shortage, people are still smoking cigarettes.”]

* * * * *

An Irish Settlement.

“Miss——, who elected to serve fourteen days’ imprisonment rather than pay a fine for an alleged assault arising out of a little commotion in Cork, was, on her release from prison, presented with a gold mounted umbrella in compensation for the one she broke on a policeman’s head.”—*Evening Herald (Dublin)*.

In view of the admission in the last sentence, “alleged” is good.

* * * * *

“New York, Friday.—An elaborate programme of welcome will be escorted to the City Hall, which has been prepared. The British Mission has been strikingly decorated for the occasion with innumerable British and Allied flags.”—*Liverpool Post*.

We are not anxiously awaiting a snapshot of Mr. *Balfour* in his latest costume.

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“The vessels are at present under construction by the Kawashi Dockyard Company, Limited, of Kobe, and realised from L42 to L42 per ton deadweight.”—*Poverty Bay Herald*.

A careful calculation will show that the average cost was almost exactly forty guineas.

* * * * *

“Several rhubord recipes have come in this week, so that the reader who esquired for recipe for rhubard jelly is supplied with this, and recipes for other rhubarb dainties as well.”—*Edmonton Journal (Canada)*.

If *John Gilpin* were to “dine at Edmonton” (Canada) he would come in for some nice new vegetables.

* * * * *

A place of arms.

[Inscribed by a humble member of the Inner Temple to the Benchers of his Inn.]

I knew a garden green and fair,
Flanking our London river's tide,
And you would think, to breathe its air
And roam its virgin lawns beside,
All shimmering in their velvet fleece,
“Nothing can hurt this haunt of Peace.”

No trespass marred that close retreat;
Privileged were the few that went
Pacing its walks with measured beat
On legal contemplation bent;
And Inner Templars used to say:
“How well our garden looks today!”

But That which changes all has changed
This guarded pleasaunce, green and fair,
And soldier-ranks therein have ranged
And trod its beauty hard and bare,
Have tramped and tramped its fretted floor
Learning the discipline of War.



And many a moon of Peace shall climb
Above that mimic Field of Mars
Before the healing touch of Time
With springing green shall hide its scars;
But Inner Templars smile and say:
"Our barrack-square looks well today."

Good was that garden in their eyes,
Lovely its spell of long-ago;
Now waste and mired its glory lies,
And yet they hold it dearer so,
Who see beneath the wounds it bears
A grace no other garden wears.

For still the memory, never sere,
But fresh as after fallen rain,
Of those who learned their lesson here
And may not ever come again,
Gives to this garden, bruised and browned,
A greenness as of hallowed ground.

O.S.

* * * * *

Random flights.

By Marcus MACLEOD.

(With renewed acknowledgments to "The Skittish Weekly.")

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It was with inexpressible relief that I heard of the narrow escape of the Rev. Urijah Basham. Presiding at a jumble sale at Sidcup he described how he had been within an ace of partaking of rhubarb leaves at luncheon on the previous day, but, having read in the morning's paper of their fatal results, wisely decided to abstain. I need hardly remind my readers that Mr. Basham is, after the Rev. JOSEPH HOCKING, perhaps our greatest preacher-novelist. The jumble sale was held in the beautiful concert hall of the Sidcup Temperance Congregational Reed Band. The Dowager-Lady Bowler, Sir Moses Pimblett, and the Rev. Chadley Bandman were amongst those who graced the function with their presence.

* * * * *

A correspondent has kindly sent me a copy of *The Little Diddlington Parish Magazine* for April. In it there is an interesting letter claiming that the original of *Mr. Pickwick* was a benevolent gentleman named Swizzle, who was temporarily employed as perpetual curate of Little Diddlington in the sixties. The evidence on which this identification is founded seems to me somewhat unconvincing, as *Pickwick* was published in the year 1836. But Nature, as it has been finely said, often borrows from Art, and Fact may similarly be inspired to emulate Fiction.

* * * * *

I promised not to trouble my readers again with the Mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask. But I may be allowed merely to mention that there is an excellent study of the subject in *The Methodist Monthly*, by my old friend, Professor Corker. The article, which runs to nearly seventy pages, does the utmost credit to this brilliant writer, who comes to the conclusion that no satisfactory solution of the mystery has ever been propounded or ever can be. But while his examination of the different theories is singularly free from bias he is evidently impressed by the ingenious view of Dr. Amos Stoot, the eminent Chicago alienist, that the masked inmate of the Bastille immured himself voluntarily in order to investigate the conditions of French prison life at the time, but, owing to the homicidal development of his subliminal consciousness, was detained indefinitely by the authorities, and during his imprisonment wrote the *Letters of Junius*.

* * * * *

I have been reading with much enjoyment, and I hope profit, a book entitled *Behind the Ivory Gate; Being the Reminiscences of a Dentist*, by Orlando Pullar, F.R.D.S. Mr. Pullar's opportunities for studying the psychology of his clients have been exceptional, and he has turned them to rich account in these fascinating pages. He is, moreover, as adroit with his pen as with the instruments of his humane and benevolent calling, and has a pretty wit. Thus he tells us that his villa at Balham is named "Tusculum," and that, in view of the fact that three generations of Pullars have been dentists, his family can be said to be of "old extraction." This pleasant quip I seem to have heard before; but, with

all deductions, there are many signs here of a strong sagacious mind, that brings to bear on all the jars of daily life the priceless emollient of moral uplift.

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* * * * *

[Illustration: THE HYPNOTIST.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: "KEEP LOOKING AT ME. YOU'RE WINNING THE WAR! YOU'RE WINNING THE WAR! YOU'RE WINNING THE WAR!"]

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

Never have I seen a kiltie platoon wading through the cold porridge of snow and slush of which our front used to be composed, but I have said, with my French friend, "*Mon Dieu, les courants d'air!*" and thank Fate that I belong to a race which reserves its national costume for fancy-dress balls.

It is very well for MacAlpine of Ben Lomond, who has stalked his haggis and devoured it raw, who beds down on thistles for preference and grows his own fur; but it is very hard on Smith of Peckham, who through no fault of his own finds himself in a Highland regiment, trying to make his shirt-tails do where his trousers did before. But the real heather-mixture, double-distilled Scot is a hardy bird with different ideas from *nous autres* as to what is cold: also as to what is hot. Witness the trying experience of our Albert Edward.

Our Albert Edward and a Hun rifle grenade arrived at the same place at the same time, intermingled and went down to the Base to be sifted. In the course of time came a wire from our Albert Edward, saying he had got the grenade out of his system and was at that moment at the railhead; were we going to send him a horse or weren't we?

Emma was detailed for the job, which was a mistake, because Emma was not the mount for a man who had been softening for five months in hospital. She had only two speeds in her repertoire, a walk which slung you up and down her back from her ears to her croup, and a trot which jarred your teeth loose and rattled the buttons off your tunic. However, she went to the railhead and Albert Edward mounted her, threw the clutch into the first speed and hammered out the ten miles to our camp, arriving smothered in snow and so stiff we had to lift him down, so raw it was a mockery to offer him a chair, and therefore he had to take his tea off the mantelpiece.

We advised a visit to Sandy. Sandy was the hot bath merchant. He lurked in a dark barn at the end of the village, and could be found there at anytime of any day, brooding over the black cauldrons in which the baths were brewed, his Tam-o'-shanter drooped over one eye, steam condensing on his blue nose. Theoretically the hot baths were

free, but in practice a franc pressed into Sandy's forepaw was found to have a strong calorific effect on the water.

So down the village on all fours, groaning like a Dutch brig in a cross-sea, went our Albert Edward. He crawled into the dark barn and, having no smaller change, contributed a two-franc bill to the forepaw and told Sandy about his awful stiffness. His eloquence and the double fee broke Sandy's heart. With great tears in his eyes he assured Albert Edward that the utmost resources of his experience and establishment should be mobilised on his (Albert Edward's) behalf, and ushered him tenderly into that hidden chamber, constructed of sacking screens, which was reserved for officers. Albert Edward peeled his clothes gingerly from him, and Sandy returned to his cauldrons.

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The peeling complete, Albert Edward sat in the draughts of the inner chamber and waited for the bath. The outer chamber was filled with smoke, and the flames were leaping six feet above the cauldrons; but every time Albert Edward holloaed for his bath Sandy implored another minute's grace.

Finally Albert Edward could stand the draughts no longer and ordered Sandy, on pain of court-martial and death, to bring the water, hot or not.

Whereupon Sandy reluctantly brought his buckets along, and, grumbling that neither his experience nor establishment had had a fair chance, emptied them into the tub. Albert Edward stepped in without further remark and sat down.

The rest of the story I had from my groom and countryman, who, along with an odd hundred other people, happened to be patronising the outer chamber tubs at the time. He told me that suddenly they heard "a yowl like a man that's afther bein' bit be a mad dog," and over the screen of the inner chamber came our Albert Edward in his birthday dress. "Took it in his sthride, Sor, an' coursed three laps round the bath-house cursin' the way he'd wither the Divil," said my groom and countryman; "then he ran out of the door into the snow an' lay down in it." He likewise told me that Albert Edward's performance had caused a profound sensation among the other bathers, and they inquired of Sandy as to the cause thereof; but Sandy shook his Tam-o'-shanter and couldn't tell them; hadn't the vaguest idea. The water he had given Albert Edward was hardly scalding, he said; hardly scalding, with barely one packet of mustard dissolved in it.

Our Albert Edward is still taking his meals off the mantelpiece.

I met my friend, the French battery commander, yesterday. He was cantering a showy chestnut mare over the turf, humming a tune aloud. He looked very fit and very much in love with the world. I asked him what he meant by it. He replied that he couldn't help it; everybody was combining to make him happy; his C.O. had fallen down a gun-pit and broken a leg; he had won two hundred francs from his pet enemy; he had discovered a jewel of a cook; and then there was always the Boche, the perfectly priceless, absolutely ridiculous, screamingly funny little Boche. The Boche, properly exploited, was a veritable fount of joy. He dreaded the end of the War, he assured me, for a world without Boches would be a salad sans the dressing.

I inquired as to how the arch-humourist had been excelling himself lately.

The Captain passaged his chestnut alongside my bay, chuckled and told me all about it. It appeared that one wet night he was rung up by the Infantry to say that the neighbouring Hun was up to some funny business, and would he stand by for a barrage, please?

What sort of funny business was the Hun putting up?

Oh, a rocket had gone up over the way and they thought it was a signal for some frightfulness or other.

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He stood by for half an hour, and then, as nothing happened, turned in. Ten minutes later the Infantry rang up again. More funny business; three rockets had gone up.

He stood by for an hour with no result, then sought his bunk once more, cursing all men. Confound the Infantry getting the jumps over a rocket or two! Confound them two times! Then a spark of inspiration glowed within him, glowed and flamed brightly. If his exalted *poilus* got the wind up over a handful of rockets, how much more also would the deteriorating Boche?

Gurgling happily, he brushed the rats off his chest and the beetles off his face, turned over and went to sleep. Next morning he wrote a letter to his “god-mother” in Paris (“*une petite femme, tres intelligente, vous savez*”), and ten days later her parcels came tumbling in. The first night (a Monday) he gave a modest display, red and white rockets bursting into green stars every five minutes. Tuesday night more rockets, with a few Catherine-wheels thrown in. Wednesday night, Catherine-wheels and golden rain, and so on until the end of the week, when they finished up with a grand special attraction and all-star programme, squibs, Catherine-wheels, Roman candles, Prince of Wales’ feathers, terminating in a blinding, fizzing barrage of coloured rockets, and “God bless our Home” in golden stars.

“All very pretty,” said I, “but what were the results?”

“Precisely what I anticipated. A deserter came over yesterday who was through it all and didn’t intend to go through it again. They had got the wind up properly, he said, hadn’t had a wink of sleep for a week. His officers had scratched themselves bald-headed trying to guess what it was all about. All ranks stood to continuously, up to their waists in mud, frozen stiff and half drowned, while *my* brave little rogues of *poilus*, mark you, slept warm in their dug-outs, and the only man on duty was the lad who was touching the fireworks off. O friend of mine, there is much innocent fun to be got out of the Boche if you’ll only give him a chance!”

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Verger (to Mrs. Smith, about to wed for fourth time)*. “VERY UNUSUAL INDEED, MRS. SMITH. I CAN’T REMEMBER ANY OF THE OTHER THREE BEING QUITE SO LATE AS THIS.”]

* * * * *

“The position of men who were not 41 before June 24, 1917, and who have since attained 41 is again the subject of much confusion.”—*Daily Dispatch*.

We can well believe this.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mollie (who has been naughty and condemned to “no toast”).* “OH, MUMMY! ANYTHING BUT THAT! I’D RATHER HAVE A HARD SMACK—ANYWHERE YOU LIKE.”]

* * * * *

A CURE FOR CURIOSITY.

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(An Idealistic Fable.)

Alfonso Ebenezer Scutt
Could never keep his mouth close shut;
And when I mention that his tongue
Was flexible and loosely hung,
You will begin to understand
Why he was honoured in our land.

A lucky *coup* in mining shares
Released him from financial cares,
And though his wife was strangely plain—
A lady of Peruvian strain—
She had a handsome revenue
Derived from manganese and glue.
Thus fortified, in Nineteen-Six
Alfonso entered politics,
Ousting from Sludgeport-on-the-Ouse
A Tory of old-fashioned views.
Alfonso Scutt, though wont to preach
In chapels, rarely made a speech,
But managed very soon to climb
To eminence at Question Time.
Fired by insatiable thirst
For knowledge, from the very first
He launched upon an endless series
Of quite unnecessary queries,
Till overworked officials came
To loathe the mention of his name.
At last their anguish grew so keen
The Premier had to intervene,
And by a tactful master-stroke
Relieved them from Alfonso's yoke.
By way of liberal reward
He made the childless Scutt a lord,
And then despatched him on a Mission
In honorific recognition
Of presents sent for our relief
By a renowned New Guinea Chief.
The natives of those distant parts
Are noted for their generous hearts,
But, spite of protests raised by us,
Continue anthropophagous.
And this, I have no doubt, was why,



When Members wished Lord Scutt good-bye,
You could not see one humid eye.

* * * * *

The moral of this simple strain
I trust is adequately plain.
When people crave for information
Unfit, in war, for publication,
They take a line, from vice or levity,
That's not conducive to longevity.

* * * * *

AN AFRICAN APPEAL.

The Baboo must look to his laurels, for other dusky aspirants to fluent articulate culture are on the warpath, and they are by no means to be underrated. I have seen lately quite a number of letters from young studious gentlemen of Ashantee, who, having acquired a little English, desire more, and develop a passion for correspondence with English strangers, whose names they pick up. The following typical example, dated March 9th, 1917, will serve to illustrate the new habit:—

“DEAR SIR,—I am with much pleasure to indite you about your name that has come to my hand with great, joy. On the receipt of this letter, know that I want to be one of your fellow friends. You have been reported to me by a friend of mine of your good attention and benevolences. My opinion of writing you is to say, I want to take you as my favourite friend. Everything or news that may be happened there at

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your side, I wish you to report same to me. And I also shall report same to you satisfaction. Will you be good enough to agree with me? Then I hope to get few lines of news from you being as you consented or disconsented. To have a friend at abroad is something that delights the life. I am earnestly requested to hear from you soon. I beg to detain, dear Sir,

"Yrs truly,
——."

To whom do you think that letter is addressed? You would suppose to some public personage with a reputation for cordial sympathy with the young and earnest, such as the CHIEF SCOUT, for instance. But no, the "Dear Sir" is in reality a limited liability company, one of whose circulars, I suppose, wandered to the Gold Coast.

* * * * *

THE LAW COURTS THEATRE.

"ROMNEY'S RUM 'UN."

London was probably never richer in comic actors than at the present moment, for not only is W.H. BERRY at the Adelphi, LESLIE HENSON at the Gaiety, ARTHUR ROBERTS at the Oxford singing his old songs, and ROBERT HALE and GEORGE ROBEY twice daily elsewhere, but in the Law Courts Playhouse CHARLES DARLING has been lately at his very best. Dropping in there last week, during the performance of a new farce, entitled *Romney's Rum 'Un*, I was again fascinated by the inexhaustible wit and allusive badinage of this great little comedian, beside whose ready gagging GEORGE GRAVES himself is inarticulate. Had not GEORGE ROBEY invented for application to himself the descriptive phrase, "The Prime Minister of Mirth," it should be at once affixed to the Law Courts' fun-maker; but, since it is too late to use that, let us think of him as "The Chancellor of the Exchequer of Mirth."

CHARLES DARLING'S success is the more remarkable because he keeps so still. He sits in his chair as steadily as another of his outdistanced rivals, SAM MAYO ("The Immobile Comedian," as he is called), remains standing. He has few gestures; he rarely, if ever, sings, and I have never seen him dance; and yet the way in which he "gets over" is astonishing. "Laughter holding both his sides" is the most constant attendant of this theatre.

What is the secret? Well, first and foremost it is of course to be sought in the genius of the actor himself; but contributory causes are the acceptivity of the audience, which is more noticeable in the Law Courts than in any other London theatre, and the willingness of his fellow-performers to "feed" him, as stage-folk have it; that is to say, provide him

with materials upon which (again resorting to stage language) he may “crack his wheezes.” The other day, for example, that excellent comedian, JOHN SIMON, was his principal ally in this way, and nothing could have been better than the sympathy between the two funny men. To CHARLES DARLING naturally fell the fat of the dialogue, but no one enjoyed the treat more than JOHN SIMON, in whose dictionary the word jealousy does not exist. LESLIE SCOTT also did his best to “feed” his principal, and the results were a scream.

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If the jokes were now and then a little legal, what did it matter? Many of the audience were legal too, and that there is no better audience the reports of the farces played here day after day abundantly prove. They are out for fun, and therefore in an appreciative and complaisant mood.

To prove a comedian's genius to the mere reader is a difficult matter, and one can never hope to re-embodiment him in all his humorous idiosyncracies; but quotation comes to one's aid, and in the case of such a wit as CHARLES DARLING it is invaluable. Thus JOHN SIMON, referring to Mrs. SIDDONS' unwieldiness in her old age, said that in a certain part she had to be helped from her knees by two attendants. Quick as lightning came the comment, "When she was younger she was able to rise on her own merits." Was ever so exquisitely funny and unexpected a turn given to the dull word "merits"? Another perfect thing from this diverting piece, followed also by Homeric cachinnations, was the mock-serious apophthegm: "If a cloud is going to support a lady of substantial proportions, you must make it fairly solid."

I came away with reluctance, filled with wonder at the want of enterprise shown by our revue-managers in not having, long ere now, secured CHARLES DARLING'S services. If only he continues to take his art seriously he has a great future. Meanwhile I am applying embrocation to my sore sides.

* * * * *

NATURE NOTES.

"The Gloaming,"

North Kensington.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I wonder if any of your intelligent readers have noticed the wonderful adaptability of Nature, of which I send you the following remarkable instance:—The yellowhammer, which we are always told sings, "A little bit of bread and no che-e-ese," has (unless my ears grossly deceive me) changed its words this year to "A little bit of cheese and no bre-e-ead!" Need I say more?

Your obedient servant, OBSERVATOR.

* * * * *

"Mr. Isaac L.— is in Cape Town. We hope the change will do Mrs. L.— good."—*Weekly Paper.*

We trust that no domestic differences are indicated.

* * * * *

“The bread ...had been collected from local hostels and barracks for pigs.”—*Daily Mail*.

Does the writer delicately hesitate to call a sty a sty, or has the internment of the food-hog really begun?

* * * * *

“Lord Robert Cecil concluded: ‘There is a well-known French proverb, Que; messieurs, les assassins commencement—let the murderers begin.’”—*Daily News*.

Our contemporary has begun.

* * * * *

REVENTLOW RUMINATES.

I have no wounds to show; the cannon’s thunder
Does not impair my rest. It’s just as well,
For, though I dote on blood, and thoughts of plunder
Act on my jaded spirit like a spell,
I could not but regard it as a blunder
If Prussia’s foremost scribe should stop a shell.

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So, while I sport the usual iron crosses,
No feats of valour pinned them on my breast,
But writing up the sanguinary losses
Inflicted by our genius in the West.
The punctual theme of my Imperial boss is
“Turn on a victory!” and I do the rest.

To praise each spasm of ruthlessness that passes
Down cringing HOLLWEG’S compromising spine,
Boost the pretensions of the ruling classes
And hail the Hohenzollerns as divine,
And never hesitate to tell the masses
They are and will continue to be swine:—

These are my task. And there are compensations
About the job that field-grey heroes lack.
Although, e.g., there is a dearth of rations,
I’m not the one that goes without his whack;
Nor do the bayonets of inferior nations
Send nervous chills down my retreating back.

Yet sometimes in the small and early watches
I think, “Good Lord! suppose the U-boats fail!
Or our Colossus of the purple blotches
Should let the Allies get him by the tail!
Suppose this war is one of Deutschland’s botches,
And Right, not Might, should happen to prevail!”

There’d be a revolution; nought could stop it.
Not that I’d weep if WILHELM had to go;
But what if Holy Junkerdom should cop it?
That would be most unfortunate—and, oh!
Supposing Count REVENTLOW had to hop it,
Kultur would never rally from the blow.

ALGOL.

* * * * *

ROYAL ACADEMY DEPRESSIONS.—II.

[Illustration: “COME ALONG, YOU LITTLE IMP! I’LL LEARN YOU TO MAKE FUN OF MY TROUSERS.”]

[Illustration: THE ETERNAL FEMININE.

“THAT’LL DO; DON’T TROUBLE ABOUT YOUR HAIR—WE’RE NOT LIKELY TO MEET ANYONE.”

“OH, I CAN’T GO LIKE THIS; ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN A SUBMARINE MAY BOB UP.”]

[Illustration: THE FOOD SHORTAGE. ARRIVAL OF THE MINT-SAUCE BOAT.]

[Illustration: *Figure on the Seat*. “HE CALLS THIS ‘THE GARDEN OF MEMORIES,’ BUT HE NEARLY FORGOT *ME*.”]

[Illustration: UNHAPPY RESULT OF A TOO GENEROUS FRUIT DIET.]

[Illustration: NATIONAL ECONOMY.

“NOW THEN, MY LADS, KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN OR WE’LL HAVE THE FRAME CONTROLLER AFTER US.”]

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[Illustration: *Second-Lieutenant Spooner (unnerved by presence of a General inspecting)*. “THE COMPANY WILL MOVE TO THE FIGHT IN ROARS. FORM—ROARS! FIGHT!”]

* * * * *

ZERO.

(“Zero-hour”—commonly known as “Zero”—is the hour fixed for the opening of an Infantry attack.)

I woke at dawn and flung the window wide.
Behind the hedge the lazy river ran;
The dusky barges idled down the tide;
In the laburnum-tree the birds began;
And it was May and half the world in flower;
I saw the sun creep over an Eastward brow,
And thought, “It may be, this is Zero-hour;
Somewhere the lads are ‘going over’ now.”

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Somewhere the guns speak sudden on the height
And build for miles their battlement of fire;
Somewhere the men that shivered all the night
Peer anxious forth and scramble through the wire,
Swarm slowly out to where the Maxims bark,
And green and red the panic rockets rise;
And Hell is loosed, and shyly sings a lark,
And the red sun climbs sadly up the skies.

Now they have won some sepulchred Gavrelle,
Some shattered homes in their own dust concealed;
Now no Bosch troubles them nor any shell,
But almost quiet holds the thankful field,
While men draw breath, and down the Arras road
Come the slow mules with battle's dreary stores,
And there is time to see the wounded stowed,
And stretcher-squads besiege the doctors' doors.

Then belches Hell anew. And all day long
The afflicted place drifts heavenward in dust;
All day the shells shriek out their devils' song;
All day men cling close to the earth's charred crust;
Till, in the dusk, the Huns come on again,
And, like some sluice, the watchers up the hill
Let loose the guns and flood the soil with slain,
And they go back, but scourge the village still.

I see it all. I see the same brave souls
To-night, to-morrow, though the half be gone,
Deafened and dazed, and hunted from their holes,
Helpless and hunger-sick, but holding on.
I shall be happy all the long day here,
But not till night shall they go up the steep,
And, nervous now because the end is near,
Totter at last to quietness and to sleep.

And men who find it easier to forget,
In England here, among the daffodils,
That there in France are fields unflowered yet,
And murderous May-days on the unlovely hills—
Let them go walking where the land is fair
And watch the breaking of a morn in May,
And think, "It may be Zero over there,
But here is Peace"—and kneel awhile, and pray.

* * * * *

“Surely one result of the war will be that civilised races will regard the German as an outcast unfit to associate with or to have dealings with on equal terms. If he is able to say ‘tu grogue’ we shall put ourselves in a false position.”—*Times of India*.

For ourselves, we decline to do this. We shall simply call him another.

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[Illustration: FOR SERVICES RENDERED.

A GERMAN DECORATION FOR BRITISH STRIKERS.]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

[Illustration: Our racing correspondent writes that Mr. LLOYD GEORGE is having some difficulty with his string (Sinn Fein’s Beauty GINNELL, All and More for Ireland REDMOND, and Ulster CARSON) for the Irish Grand National.]

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Monday, May 14th.—No longer will the FIRST SEA LORD be distracted from his primary duty of strafing the Hun by the necessity of looking after supplies. That function will now be discharged by an hon. and temp. Vice-Admiral, in the person of Sir ERIC GEDDES, late hon. and temp. Major-General and Director of Transportation to the Army in France, and now Shipbuilder-in-Chief to the nation. Everyone seemed pleased, with the notable exception of Mr. HOGGE, who cannot understand why all these appointments should be showered upon Sir ERIC GEDDES, when there are other able Scotsmen still unemployed. A late hon. Admiral of the Fleet, now residing at Potsdam, is believed to share Mr. HOGGE'S objections.

The hardships endured by the criminal classes when they are so unfortunate as to get into prison always strikes a sympathetic chord in the gentle breast of Mr. EDMUND HARVEY. His latest discovery is that they are allowed the use of writing-paper not more than once a month; and for the rest of the time have to entrust their literary compositions to the unsympathetic surface of a slate, with the aid of a probably squeaky slate-pencil. Could JOHN BUNYAN have written *The Pilgrim's Progress* under such conditions? The question opens up a vista of speculation as to the influence of environment upon the creative faculty; and it is not surprising that Mr. BRACE was unable to answer it offhand.

In ordinary times the Financial Secretary of the Treasury is the most important Member of the Government outside the Cabinet. Under the present *regime* he is not a member of the House at all. It is true that Mr. BALDWIN takes his place as Parliamentary whipping-boy to the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER with much grace and good humour; but that does not satisfy hon. Members, who want a more substantial object for their daily castigation. The debate on this subject revealed a sharp division of opinion between Mr. EDWIN MONTAGU and Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL. COUSIN EDWIN, as an ex-Secretary of the Treasury, did not think the House had suffered any serious loss through being unable to cross-examine that official direct. COUSIN HERBERT was shocked at this revolutionary sentiment coming from his kinsman. If it were accepted there was no logical reason why even the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have a seat in the House. Why, indeed, have Ministers at all? A row of gramophones, ranged along the Treasury Bench and supplied with officially prepared records, would satisfy all legitimate curiosity.

Tuesday, May 15th.—I forget how many weeks ago it is since Mr. BONAR LAW announced that the Government were going to make one more effort to settle the Irish Question, and that in due course the PRIME MINISTER would announce their proposals. Since then events have conspired to produce successive postponements. Mr. LLOYD GEORGE had to go to France—for the War refuses to stop even though Irishmen decline to encourage it—Mr. REDMOND fell ill, Archbishop WALSH indited a postscript, and an election in South Longford suggested doubts as to whether Nationalist M.P.'s were really the Irish nation after all. Nevertheless there is a plan; and

it is to be communicated, but in the first instance to the leaders of Irish parties only, and then, if they please, to the Press, and finally, perhaps, to the House of Commons.

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Wednesday, May 16th.—We all want to help the new Russian Government in its difficult task, but I doubt if Mr. SNOWDEN and his pacifist friends have contributed to that end by inviting the House of Commons to endorse forthwith the “no annexation, no indemnities” declaration of a section of the Revolutionaries, and by supporting their proposal in a series of speeches which might be summed up in the words “Peace at any Price.” Even the German CHANCELLOR will not be wholly pleased, for the debate revealed that, apart from the seven or eight gentlemen who follow the white flag of the Member for Blackburn, the House is absolutely fixed in its determination to defeat German militarism before talking of peace.

After the searching analysis to which the hon. Member’s confident statements were subjected by Lord ROBERT CECIL and Mr. A.F. WHYTE there was nothing left of them but a trace of acid.

So far as I am aware the Member for Blackburn has never endangered the integrity of his principles by helping his country in any way to win the War. In this respect Mr. LEES SMITH, who seconded the motion, has a less consistent record, for he has worn khaki as an orderly of the R.A.M.C. But in his case service abroad seems only to have confirmed his peculiar principles, for he thinks that we ought to return the German colonies, and enable the natives to enjoy once again the blessings of *Kultur*. If he ever saw the Hun while he was in France it must have been through a pair of rose-tinted binoculars.

Thursday, May 17th.—We are all agog to know whether the PRIME MINISTER’S offer of immediate Home Rule to twenty-six Counties of Ireland is to be blessed or banned by the Nationalists. This is the day when Irish Questions have priority, and the House hears such important inquiries as whether Hibernian holiday-makers will have their excursion-trains restored to them; what became of a side of bacon captured by the police during the Easter Monday rebellion, and why a certain magistrate should have been struck off the Commission of the Peace for a trifling refusal to take the oath of allegiance. Are we to go without this entertainment in the future, or will Mr. REDMOND refuse to rob Westminster of its gaiety even for the sake of College Green?

If, as I ventured to suggest last week, the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER had laid in a stock of tobacco before the Budget he has evidently exhausted it by now, for, on his attention again being called to the exorbitant charge of the tobacconists, he no longer pooh-poohed the matter, but sternly declared that the situation was being closely watched.

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

“The Car that never fails to give anything but satisfaction to its owners.”—*Advertisement in “Indian Motor News.”*

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[Illustration: *Amateur (awaiting his turn to perform).* “A-ARE YOU NERVOUS, OLD CHAP?”

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Infant Prodigy (ditto). "WHAT IS 'NERVOUS'?"]

* * * * *

MY AMERICAN COUSINS.

Because they speak the tongue that's mine,
Rich in the treasure that belongs
To them as well as me, and twine
Their heart-strings in our English songs,
I knew they'd scorn those German threats
And sham regrets.

Because their country's name is scrolled
With Liberty's; because her fate,
Like England's own, must be unrolled
In Freedom still, they had to hate
The thought of bowing down before
A Lord of War.

And now they'll lavish in the strife
The gold they've scorned to love too well,
And fleets to bring the food that's life,
And guns of death, and steel and shell;
Defeat or triumph, stand or fall,
They'll share their all.

They're out for business; now's their Day;
They took their time, but finished right;
The heat got slowly comes to stay;
Patient for peace means firm in fight;
And so their country still shall be
Land of the Free.

* * * * *

"Remarkable scenes were witnessed at Exeter yesterday at the
free distribution of 10,000 lbs. of potatoes in 5 lb. lots.
Five thousand people obtained 5 lbs. each."—*Sunday Paper*.

This result was obtained by the forethought of the distributors, who had the potatoes
laid out on multiplication tables.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Farmer*. "WHAT THE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING? AND WITH THEM 'ORSES STANDIN' HIDLE?"

Tommy. "CLEANIN' ME BUTTONS. 'AVEN'T YOU NEVER BEEN A SOLDIER?"]

* * * * *

THE DOLLS THAT DID THEIR BIT.

"*Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?*" asked Jeanne, holding out her basket towards the first of her dolls seated in a semi-circle before her. Most of them were quite familiar with the game, but for the sake of a new-comer Jeanne had explained that each player must place in the basket some object the name of which ended with *on*, to rhyme with *corbillon*. She had announced that this time the game was in aid of a cause, and that therefore it must be played with *things* and not with words only.

"Qu'y met-on, Marie?" repeated Jeanne. "Rappelez-vous bien que c'est une quete a l'intention des petites filles polonaises internees au camp de Havelberg!" What, Marie had nothing but her chain necklace, and that did not end in *on*? No, but the links of the chain did, argued Jeanne. "Donne *des chainons!*" she prompted in a whisper. "J'y mets des chainons," said Marie in Jeanne's thinnest voice, and the necklace found its way into the basket.

"*Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?* A vous, Marthe. O," exclaimed Jeanne, "tu y mets ton *chignon*? Eh bien, tu sais, n'est-ce pas, beta, qu'il faut que tu t'y mettes avec!" and into the basket she went after a lingering caress from Jeanne.

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"Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" It was the turn now of Yvonne in her bed. "Comment," said Jeanne, affecting indignation, "si tu n'étais pas si frileuse tu donnerais ton edredon?" And what about the little *poupees polonaises interneées*, snatched from their beds and carried off without any bedclothes at all, let alone an eiderdown! Presently, "J'y mets mon edredon," Yvonne was understood to say, and "Sage!" approved Jeanne.

"Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" Jacques, mon pauvre ami, tu n'as pas de chance, hein?" There was no help for it; it was the only thing he had that rhymed. "Imagine la joie des petites polonaises interneées!" she urged, taking the necessary action. "J'y mets mon pantalon," piped a disconsolate little thread of voice.

"Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" A vous, Mikadesse!" A beam of pleasure, succeeded by a falling of the countenance, then a look of decision, ended in a "Houp-la!" as the Japanese doll descended into the basket, and was made to say, "J'y mets une poupee du Japon!" After all she was an ally of the little polonaises.

"Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" Allons, les jumeaux! a vous!" Jeanne thought the twins were really in a plight and that she would have to help them out with a gift, but, quick as thought, Castor seized Pollux, saying, "J'y mets mon compagnon!" and Pollux, divining his intention, grasped Castor, declaring excitedly, "Et moi aussi, j'y mets mon compagnon" And into the basket they leapt together. "Ils s'entetent a rester inseparables," sighed Jeanne; "c'est bien."

"Je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" Adelaide never had possessed anything worth giving away, and yet she seemed to be suggesting that the contents of the basket did not look very imposing so far, and would hardly be enough to go round among so many little Poles, so Jeanne came to the rescue with gifts of toys until "J'y mets ma contribution!" came jubilantly forth in a voice that forgot to be Adelaide's.

All had now contributed. Yet Jeanne had a feeling that somehow it was not the end of the game. She pondered gravely for a few moments, then, placing herself solemnly before the mirror, she addressed herself:—

"Jeanne, je vous tends mon corbillon: qu'y met-on?" After a few seconds she began to see what she ought to do.

"Qu'y mets-tu, Jeanne?" It would be rather hard, but she must do it.

Sitting down and turning up the skirt of her frock, she took each of the contributors, kissed and caressed them, and placed them in her lap. Adelaide only did she except, explaining to the others, "Oui, mes chéris, je garde Adelaide, car savez-vous bien, c'est elle qui me donne des idées; je prends toujours conseil avec elle. Alors, n'est ce pas?" Then, carrying the dolls in her petticoat, she solemnly undid the button, let it slip down

with the dolls inside, and placed it resolutely in the basket, saying: “J’y mets mon jupon!”

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What was Adelaide saying? One must give cheerfully and not regret the gift? *Surtout il ne faut pas verser une larme!*

So, hugging her doll, Jeanne returned to the mirror and added, smiling, “Avec sa-tis-fac-ti-on!”

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Officer’s Servant (replying to adverse criticism of war-worn charger).* “I ’EARD THE GUVNOR SAY THERE WAS THREE ’UNDRED QUID REFUSED FOR ’IM BEFORE THE WAR. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?”

Jock. “WEEL, I’M THENKIN’ THERE WAS TWA FOOLS MET THAT DAY, AND I DINNA KEN WHICH O’ THEM WAS THE BIGGER.”]

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“Prospects in English Literature.
III.—Looking Backward.”—*The Athenaeum*.

We trust this is only preliminary to a further advance.

* * * * *

“Shepherds in Scotland are feeding lambs with whisky and hot milk. Many titled landed proprietors are acting as shepherds.”—*Daily News*.

Surely our Radical contemporary does not mean to suggest—

* * * * *

FAIRIES.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
It’s not so very, very far away;
You pass the gardener’s shed and you just keep straight ahead;
I do so hope they’ve really come to stay.
There’s a little wood, with moss in it and beetles,
And a little stream that quietly runs through;
You wouldn’t think they’d dare to come merrymaking there—
Well, they do.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
They often have a dance on summer nights;



The butterflies and bees make a lovely little breeze,
And the rabbits stand about and hold the lights.
Did you know that they could sit upon the moonbeams
And pick a little star to make a fan,
And dance away up there in the middle of the air?
Well, they can.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
You cannot think how beautiful they are;
They all stand up and sing when the Fairy Queen and King
Come gently floating down upon their car.
The King is very proud and very handsome;
The Queen—now can you guess who that could be
(She's a little girl all day, but at night she steals away)?—
Well—it's ME!

* * * * *

“Young Lady Wanted, for few months, as Companion-Help
(seaside); fare paid and 6d. week pocket-money; or would
train Girl as Housemaid, same terms.”—*Provincial Paper*.

Such extravagance in war-time ought to be checked.

* * * * *

“SHADY GERMAN TRICK.

“In the village of Boisleux-au-Mout the Germans utilised part of the cemetery to bury
their own dead, but before doing so deliberately hewed down every tree growing on the
side of the ground where the French graves lie.”—*Daily Paper*.

Is “shady” quite the right word for this outrage?

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PEAS AND PLEDGES.

"Has anything special," I said, "been happening during my absence?"

"We are up to our chins in work," said Francesca.

"But is it real work?"

"Of course it is. We've formed a General Committee, of which everybody's a member, including you, and we've formed an Executive Committee, of which there are about a dozen members. And then there are some Sub-Committees."

"Yes, I know. The Executive Committee thinks it's going to do all the work, but it's got to report to the General Committee, and it'll be a great piece of luck if the General Committee doesn't insist on asserting itself by upsetting all the decisions of the Executive Committee."

"Oh, but our General Committee isn't going to be like that at all. There won't be any petty jealousy about our General Committee. Besides, the Executive Committee has power to act, and it doesn't need to report till the Annual Meeting of the General Committee, which is to be held a year from now. When that time comes lots of things will have happened."

"That," I said, "is one of the truest things you've ever said. Even the War may be over by that time."

"But if it isn't we shall all be living on swedes or pea-soup, or rice-bread or all three together; and we shall have a food controller in every village, and our Committees won't be wanted."

"I beg your pardon; they'll be more wanted than ever to keep the controller straight and act as a buffer between him and the population."

"But they won't know they're a buffer, and they won't like it when some tactless person tells them. Anyhow, that's a long way off, and in the meantime we've got the land."

"Who've got what land?"

"Our Committee," said Francesca, "have got two acres of land from Mr. Carberry, and we're going to grow a crop of peas on it so that everybody may have pea-soup in case of a pinch."

"But what about the peas?" I said, "Have you made sure of those?"

“We had a good deal of trouble about them, but we’ve got a firm promise of six bushels.”

“Capital! But are you quite sure you know how to bring the land and the peas together?”

“Well, I’m not so much of an expert as I should like to be, but Mr. Bolton ’s a practical farmer, and he’s going to do all he can for us.”

“Will he plough it?”

“It’s been ploughed twice, so he’s undertaken to harrow it and scarify it—doesn’t it sound awful?—and then something else is going to happen to it, but I forget what it’s called.”

“Wouldn’t it be a good thing, at some stage or other, to plant the peas?”

“Yes, it would; but you can’t do it as simply as all that, can you? Isn’t there something highly agricultural that you must do first?”

“I should chuck ’em in and chance it.”

“A nice farmer you’d make,” she said scornfully. “I’m remembering it now. It’s got something to do with drills.”

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"Like the Volunteers?"

"No, not a bit like the Volunteers."

"Well, then, like potatoes."

"Yes, more like potatoes, except that they're peas in this case."

"How true," I said.

"Yes. And don't forget that while you were away we formed a League of Honour in the village and bound ourselves to observe the FOOD CONTROLLER'S rations."

"Am I a member?"

"Yes, we thought you'd like to be one, so I gave your name in."

"I think a man must pledge his own honour. He can't have it done for him."

"There's no public ceremony. You can just pledge yourself in your mind, and then put a pledge card in one of the windows."

"I'll have tea first," I said, "and then I'll choose the window, and then I'll pledge myself in my mind."

"No, you can do the pledging now."

"I've done it, while you were talking."

"And after all it's only the old rations according to Lord DEVONPORT, and we've been working under them for some time now."

"So we have," I said; "but of course the card in the window makes all the difference."

R.C.L.

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[Illustration: THE SERVANT PROBLEM.

Lady. "AND WHY DID YOUR LAST MISTRESS——"

Applicant (loftily). "EXCUSE ME, MADAM!"

Lady. "WELL—ER—YOUR LAST EMPLOYER——"

Applicant. "I BEG YOUR PARDON, MADAM!"

Lady. "WELL, THEN, YOUR LAST—ER—PRAY WHAT DO YOU CALL THOSE IN WHOSE SERVICE YOU ARE ENGAGED?"

Applicant. "CLIENTS, MADAM." [*Collapse of interrogator.*]

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OUR MODEST CONTEMPORARIES.

"Had it been intended to make any new pronouncement of importance the Berlin Government would have taken steps to circulate the speech by wireless in time for publication in 'The Star' yesterday evening."—*The Star*.

It is possible that Dr. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG was misled by our contemporary's habit of publishing its "7.0 Edition" at 4.30.

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From an obituary notice:—

"He had studied Eastern religions, and claimed to have been initiated as a llama of Tibet."—*Daily Mail*.

Or should it be the Grand Lama of Peru?

* * * * *

"The—Food Economy Committee were astounded yesterday at the secretary's report of a collier's family of six persons who consumed twenty half-quartern loaves in one week, averaging twenty pounds of bread per person."—*Sunday Chronicle*.

It is not stated whether the astonishment was caused by the family's appetite or the secretary's arithmetic.

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[*Illustration: Fond Mother (reading).* "'OUR CAPTAIN IS ONE OF THE BEST, AND WE'RE READY TO FOLLOW HIM TO H—L.' I SUPPOSE HE MEANS THE HINDENBURG LINE."]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

In the list of heroic young soldier-authors whose gifts the War has revealed to us only to snatch them away, the name of DONALD HANKEY already holds an honoured place. It will, therefore, be good news to the many admirers of *A Student in Arms* that a further selection of these heartening and fine-spirited papers has been prepared under the title of *A Student in Arms—Second Series* (MELROSE). The thousands who already know and admire Lieut. HANKEY'S work will need no introduction to this, which exhibits all the qualities of courage and sympathy that have given the former book a world-wide popularity. They, and others, will however welcome the occasion afforded here of learning something about the life and personality of the writer, which they will do both from the short preface contributed by one whose identity is hardly disguised under the initials "H.M.A.H.," and from a couple of papers, autobiographical, that end the volume. Rugbyans especially will be interested to read DONALD HANKEY'S recollections of his school-days, with their tribute to the house-master affectionately known to so many generations as "Jackey." A book, in short, that will add to the admiration and regret with which its author is spoken of in three continents.

* * * * *

He Looked in My Window (CHATTO AND WINDUS), by ROBERT HALIFAX, gives the adventures of *Ruth Shadd*, dearest of dwellers in a meanish street, during her determined hunt for a husband. It would have been easy to make all this unlovely in its frankness, but the author very skilfully (and, I think, very sincerely) avoids this. *Ruth* is a fine girl, with character and candour, those too rare assets, and having pursued, and found wanting, *Bert*, the swanker, who hasn't the courage for matrimony; the polite and fatuously prudent *Archie*, and *Joe*, the vegetarian, who had such exalted faith in malt, she wins a deserved happiness with someone that she had never even thought of pursuing. Mr. HALIFAX gives me an impression of almost cinematographic and gramophonic exactness in his portraiture. *George Shadd*, *Ruth's* father, who worked in the gasworks and was one of the very best, delighted me particularly, with his pathetic little garden, his battle with the slugs and black-fly, and his fine patience with *Mrs. Shadd*, who put her washing before his fire and her props among his choicest seedlings—a difficult woman indeed. The author writes with humour and sympathy; and that is the way to write of this brave if narrow life. It is the first time I have looked in Mr. HALIFAX'S window. I shall take steps to do so again. 'Tis a nice clean window.

* * * * *

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Not even the most confirmed Gallio can avoid caring for *Arthur Stanton—A Memoir*, by the Rt. Hon. G.W.E. RUSSELL (LONGMANS), when he has once dipped his mind into the book. It is the record of a singularly beautiful and beneficent life, lived to the very utmost in the service of God and man, and ruled by a simple and direct religion which constantly forced practice up to the exalted level of precept. Judged by merely worldly standards of achievement, ARTHUR STANTON'S life could not be considered a success. He began as curate of St. Alban's, Holborn, and as curate of St. Alban's he ended after many years of enthusiastic devotion to humanity. He was foiled and thwarted by the great ones of the Church, inhibited in one place, suspended in another, and frequently doomed to find a Bishop or a Chaplain-General set, like a lion, across his path. But nothing could avail to stop him where he found a soul that could be saved or misery that could be relieved. His congregation, drawn from the slums of Holborn, would have died for him to a man, for they realised with how great an ardour his life was spent in order that he might help them. His faith was not a mystery kept apart for special occasions, but a daily and hourly influence vivifying his words and directing his actions. And no man could have enjoyed himself more than this true saint and interpreter of God to man. His religion was not one of gloom and foreboding, but a cheerful and delightful habit of mind and soul. *Tantum religio potuit suadere bonorum*. Mr. RUSSELL has done his work with great skill and perfect sympathy, and has produced a book that does honour to himself and to the beloved friend whom it is his privilege to commemorate.

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The many readers of *Punch* who took a close interest in ALEC JOHNSTON'S letters written "At the Back of the Front" and "At the Front" will be glad to have them in collected form. The memory of his gallant end—he was killed in action after the brilliant capture of a salient near Ypres, at the head of his company of Shropshires—is fresh in all our hearts. A preface to *At the Front* (CONSTABLE) contains an appreciation of his high character and soldierly qualities by his friend and fellow-officer, Captain INGRAM, R.A.M.C., D.S.O., M.C., who a few weeks later was himself killed. It is a fine tribute paid by one true soldier to another. These letters of ALEC JOHNSTON, as their editor reminds us, "were composed in the brief interludes snatched from hard fighting and hard fatigues. They never pretended to be more than the gay and cynical banter of one who brought to the perils of life at the Front an incurable habit of humour. They are typical of that brave spirit, essentially English, that makes light of the worst that fate can send."

* * * * *

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It must, I should think, be exceedingly difficult to find a new title in these days for a volume of reminiscences. Mr. RAYMOND BLATHWAYT seems to have solved the problem happily enough by calling his contribution to the rapidly-increasing library of recollections, *Through Life and Round the World* (ALLEN). One way and another, first as a curate (rightly termed by the publishers “rather unconventional”), later as journalist, Mr. BLATHWAYT has contrived to use a pair of remarkably open eyes with excellent effect. The result is this fat volume, whose contents, if honesty constrains me to call the most of them gossip, are at least generally entertaining and never ill-natured. Needless to say, Mr. BLATHWAYT, like the elder *Capulet*, can “tell a tale such as will please.” For myself, out of a goodly store, I should select for first honours a repartee, new to me, of Sir HERBERT TREE (forgive this dropping into rhyme!). It tells of a boastful old-time actor, vaunting his triumphs as *Hamlet*, when “the audience took fifteen minutes leaving the theatre.” “*Was ha lame?*” If our only HERBERT did not in fact make this reply, I can only hope that he will at once hasten home and do so. But while we are upon Mr. BLATHWAYT’S dramatic recollections, I must respectfully traverse his dictum that some of the acting at the local pageants of a few years back “surpassed the very best I have seen upon the stage.” As one who took a personal part in many of those well-meant revivals, and dates a relaxed throat from the effort of vociferating history, up-wind, towards a stand full of ear-straining auditors, I bow but remain unconvinced.

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Although the literary style of Mr. JULIUS M. PRICE, of *The Illustrated London News*, is too breezy for my taste, I am glad to have read his *Six Months on the Italian Front* (CHAPMAN AND HALL). Possibly he under-estimates our appreciation of Italy’s share in the War’s burden, but his account of the conditions prevailing upon the Italian front, and of the courage and skill with which they have been overcome, deserves our undiluted approval. It is difficult to believe that anyone who is not at least a member of the Alpine Club can dimly realise the engineering feats which the Italian soldiers have performed. Mr. PRICE has been given many opportunities of observation, and where none was given to him he has contrived to make them for himself. And the result is a book full of incident and excitement. I hope that he will pardon me when I add that my sense of gratitude would have been greater if, in addition to the photograph of himself—or even instead of it—he had given us a map. For the rest his illustrations are excellent.

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To MARTIN SWAYNE, officer in the R.A.M.C., on his lawful occasions or in the intervals of swatting flies *In Mesopotamia* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), there came some thoughts pleasant and bitter, and you can see that he has selected the pleasant and cut out the others, partly because of his loyalty and humour, and partly, no doubt, in deference to the prejudices of censorship. And he writes his selection of printable remarks in a very agreeable and not undistinguished idiom, pointing the narrative with reflections sane and sage enough. He has also made some water-colour notes (here reproduced in colour) of things seen; not remarkable, but adequate to convey an impression. We have all lamented the confusions (shall we call them?) of the medical service, and the trials of our troops in that blessed region entered through Kurna, the Gate of the Garden of Eden, in the early days of the Mesopotamian adventure. The author reports a radical improvement, and if Eden isn't exactly the name you'd give to this pest-ridden country at least the fighting men are now backed by the devotion and competence of the healing men, and all goes well for both. To the bulldog might well be added the retriever as our national emblem. We are some retrievers.

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[Illustration: OUR MIXED ARMY.

Refined Ex-Journalist. "DON'T YOU THINK THAT COOK HAS STRESSED THE ONIONS A LITTLE IN THE STEW TO-DAY?"]

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From an article headed "Outlook for Oil":—

"It is urged in commercial circles that the Government should secure men with laboratory experience, plus a complete absence of practical knowledge, to report on shale deposits."—*Australian Paper.*

We thought it was only in the Old Country that Governments had any use for that sort of man.